

Transcription: Glenn Morgan

Today is Thursday, October 23rd, 2008, and my name is James Crabtree and I'll be interviewing Mr. Glenn Morgan. This interview is taking place by phone. I'm at the General Land Office at 1700 North Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas, and Mr. Morgan is at his home in Weatherford, Texas, and we're being joined by also Mr. Bob Ray Sanders who is a writer for the Fort Worth Star Telegram, and he is at his office in Fort Worth. This interview is being conducted in support of the Texas Land Board's Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. So now that I've got that all out of the way, sir, I guess usually the way these interviews go is we want to record your memory, your experiences, for future generations and historians and that sort of thing because most of the battles and the generals, they're pretty well known, and our hope is to get the first hand experiences of the troops and the soldiers and the sailors that were there so that ultimately the story all comes together kind of like a patchwork quilt and we have all these accounts that we can save for posterity. First thing I'd like to ask sir is just maybe tell us a little bit about your background, where you were born, where you're from, maybe a little bit about your family before you joined the Navy.

Glenn Morgan: Well I was born in Bristol, Oklahoma. I never lived there that I can remember, of course. But we were all field people and we went all over. I started my first grade of school in Pampa, Texas, and from there migrated you might say to Kansas and then finally to Illinois. I went to work for Texaco back somewhere in '43, and let's see, I was drafted about six months later. As a matter of fact, the draft board didn't even know where I was because my draft board was in Great Bend, Kansas. So all my friends had gone except a couple, and I was ordered to join the Air Corps. They sent me a notice to come over and take a test, but I didn't get the thing in time. So I didn't get in there, and so I just waited to be drafted, but I didn't get my greetings from the draft board. I thought perhaps they didn't know where I was, which they didn't. And so I'd been to a lot of schools and I'd gotten out of high school and graduated in Salem, Illinois, then, so that's where I was when I got my greetings. So they told me then to go ahead and get on a train and go join the Army.

At that point did you pretty much expect that you would be drafted, or had you thought about joining?

Glenn Morgan: Oh yes, yes, I was pretty sure I would be drafted. I thought maybe I had some type of medical decision or something that they wouldn't take me, but apparently that didn't work. But at any rate, yeah, I got my greetings and was told just exactly what to do, get on a train and go to Chicago and go into the Army building right up there in the middle of Chicago. And actually the way it happened, I got on the train at Salem, Illinois and there was my good friend. Well, we were friends. We'd gone to school, had one class together, and he was being drafted. And another fellow I didn't know. So three of us got on the C and the I railroad train and went to Chicago. So I had worked for Texaco for six months. I was fairly proficient by that time in running a transit, so they gave me a little paper that said this branch would help you. And so I took it. So as we got up to the Army building, we walked from Deerborn station I think, there were a lot of naked fellows going through what they told me was a short arm inspection. Of course I didn't know what that was at that time. So I stood there in awe and my two friends did, and I happened to see a young Naval officer on the other side of these naked bodies walking down toward the hall, and so I asked these two fellows if they'd like to get in the Coast Guard because to me, that sounded pretty reasonable and I could stay home. So we hustled down the hall, talked to the naval officer, and he said no, you can't get in the Coast

Guard, said you could get in the Marines or the Navy or the CB's, and he said if you haven't signed any papers, just walk down the end of this hall, go down the stairs, block over and a half block down is the Naval recruiting station, and this is what we did. So I handed my little paper that Texaco had made for me and a CB came almost charging over, and said boy, we can use you. So they'd lined us up against the wall. We got our pick except we couldn't get in the Coast Guard. They said that was closed. Anyway we all opted to join the Navy right there, and that's how we got in the Navy. So I didn't actually get drafted I guess.

So that was some time in 1943.

Glenn Morgan: Yes.

Do you remember the month?

Glenn Morgan: It must've been some time in March, I believe.

March of '43. What did your folks and your family think about you entering the service?

Glenn Morgan: They were in Oklahoma at the time. My dad was a machinist and he was still working. And they didn't have anything to say about it. But they knew where I was all the time. I kept 'em posted and they knew just about, I'd write 'em a letter occasionally. I don't think I wrote too many letters to them. But they knew where I was. They didn't have much to say about it.

After you joined the Navy, did you do all of your basic training there at Great Lakes?

Glenn Morgan: Yes. We went right straight to Great Lakes and went through, I had taken my, you know, my rating was Eagle Master Third Class, and the way I got that was sheer accident because I played a cornet and my brother was 12 years older than me. He worked for a golf ball company, and my band director in Elwood, Kansas, said look, can you get a new horn or something? This one's not too good. Well, I said I don't know about that. I don't think I can afford a new one. But my brother came to my rescue and he paid \$91 for a King cornet, and this was a lot of money then, for him, especially. So I took my King cornet to boot camp with me so I'd have something to do. So I was in the barracks and I would sit on my bunk and pull out my cornet and toot around on it a little bit, and the fellows there in the barracks suggested that perhaps I would like it better if I played it in the head, of course, the restroom. And I took this to mean, it was only a suggestion, but the inflection made me think that they kind of meant it. Apparently they didn't care for my beautiful cornet tones. But anyway, I was playing in the head one night, playing Stardust as a matter of fact, you know what that is, but some guy popped his head in there and said are you Morgan? And I said yes. He said how come you're not in the Drum & Bugle Corps? Well I said what does that get me? He said it'll get out of a lot of marching. He said come over in the morning and we'll take a test and if you pass it, he said you'll be in the Drum & Bugle Corps and you won't have to march with your company. Well we did a lot of marching. And I thought well that might be all right. So I went over and passed a little test. Pretty simple because most of the calls I already knew since I was a Boy Scout and I was a Boy Scout bugler. So I got out of quite a bit of marching and I felt bad about it, so I went back to the chief petty officer that was in charge and told him, I said I can play a snare drum. If you like, I'll come back. Some of these guys couldn't keep in step worth a hoot and I thought well, that might help. So I did. I took the snare drum and went back occasionally and marched with 'em. Got through boot camp and the first thing I knew, when I went back from my boot

leave to Salem, why my girlfriend was there and my brothers. My brother lived about 17 miles from there. And by golly we got married and I still have her.

Oh that's great. What did she think about you getting ready to ship out to war?

Glenn Morgan: Well of course she went back. She was just a little girl. She just got out of high school. I'd graduated. She was two years behind me, so she just graduated and we got permission from her parents and all this business, and went down about 20, took a bus 20 miles. I don't know why we did this, to Mt. Vernon, Illinois. We got married there. As a matter of fact, we took our papers and went upstairs in some place for a justice of the peace. Somebody told us who he was, where to go. So he was a very old fellow and he sat there and we're not sure he was listening, but he did. He raised up and made some movement. And we sort of thought maybe later that maybe the last words he ever said was I now pronounce you man and wife. However, we made it pretty good and went back to the Navy after my seven-day boot leave, and when I got there I found out I was rated as a bugle ____ second class, and I thought well, isn't that nice. What does that do? And I found out I was stationed there. I was in ship's company and I was to handle a Drum & Bugle Corps there, and that's what I did for five months.

Was there a place, was your wife able to live with you?

Glenn Morgan: Yes, what happened then while I was stationed there, why she came up from Granton, Louisiana. She was staying with her parents there. And she came up and I met her at the depot there in Chicago. We rented a little bitty apartment and she got a job out there on the base. And shoot, it wasn't really bad. We'd go into Waukegan every evening and I didn't have to stay on base of course. So this went pretty good and I was there for about five months. The buglers were not a part of the regimental people. The commander that was in charge of this tried to, when I got shipping papers, he actually tried to hold me there. We were doing pretty good and we had a pretty nice Drum & Bugle Corps.

How did it come about that after five months you got orders to join a ship?

Glenn Morgan: Apparently, this is a process that the Drum & Bugle Corps, it's a separate entity from this whole thing, and they said well, I guess he's been there long enough. The commander told me, he said now I've tried to stop it, but he says your orders have been cut and they said no, this was the way they had to work it. So I was shipped to San Francisco and Mirty, my wife, came out there, too. She got a job with the Army in civil service out on a big pier, Pier 45 there in San Francisco. I was stationed there on Treasure Island, and actually I was attached to a troop ship. And it was a stackette ship, it was called the General Pasker H. Bliss, so this was pretty good, and they were gathering the crew and I began to meet a lot of fellows, and actually ran into a guy I actually went to school with in Salem. He wasn't attached to the ship. So we were doing pretty good there. I'd go over on Liberty and we had a little apartment over there in San Francisco and everything was going pretty good until I got back from Liberty one day and they said Morgan, pack your gear. And I said well, wait a minute, what for? They said you're being transferred. I said you can't do that. I'm attached to the troops here. I'd already gone to gunnery school. I could fire a 5-inch .38 and I could put out fire. I said I can't do this, I'm already tied up. They said are you kidding? So they pulled another bugler off another ship and put us on a bus and sent us to Vallejo, California. And there sat the USS Indianapolis.

So this was sometime in late 1943?

Glenn Morgan: Somewhere in that area. I can't, no let's see, I was five months, I'll tell you what, it was just at the end of the year there I believe.

Yeah, late '43.

Glenn Morgan: Yeah, and they dumped us off at this pier and there sat this big ship I'd never seen one before up close, of course. As a matter of fact, it looked quite ominous. So old Calvin and I walked down and across the ground and they said whenever you go aboard, you salute the ensign and that's what we did, and stepped down on the quarterback and our lives were changed forever. So that's how I came aboard. In fact, two buglers that were on this thing, one was a Marine. Of course they had a detachment of Marines aboard. One was a Marine, one was a sailor, and they were waiting for us. They apparently knew we were coming and they couldn't wait to get off of that thing. They said we've been waiting for you guys. So we bid them goodbye and we were the only two on there for about three months, and then we got two more buglers.

What were your normal duties like as a bugler aboard the ship?

Glenn Morgan: Well, what happened was, we were under the jurisdiction of a first class petty officer. We were in what they called the navigation division and of course he was a _____ [static or interference for a couple of seconds] and I took my orders from him and he said Morgan, you'll be on the bridge all the time. We'll ____ over to you on telephone. _____. He said well, talk over _____. This is an important position, and he says you'll be doing that. And I said well just exactly where is it we're heading? He said _____. He didn't give me much more than that. The other fellow went to a place called Battle 2. So _____ what was going on and we stood our watches down in what they called central station. And all we had to do was sit there. We didn't have anything to do until general orders, he says toot the bugle. And once we sounded any type of call, that meant that we had to do something like you know, orders. Well we would sound this thing from down there, a little bent, beat up bugle, and then we would run and climb up a ladder and several ladders and all the way topside and I'd go all the way to the bridge. And it was, I thought it was kind of an unusual way of operation. But we did this for almost three months I think before the other two buglers, and then they changed the whole thing around and we didn't stand our watches. We stood watches, regular watches on the bridge. I was always on the bridge. My regular watch was always on the bridge.

Between the two of you, you -

Glenn Morgan: We alternated on the bridge.

Yeah. That's what I was gonna ask. Would you and the other bugler, was one of you always on duty?

Glenn Morgan: Yeah, always on duty on the bridge. Then during general quarters is when I would have to take over these jail telephones and actually I remember the first, we headed out of San Francisco and I already was beginning. I couldn't believe that I would get sick, not me, not seasick, but I did. Not really bad, but enough that I was really uncomfortable. So we headed out and I'd never taken these telephones over yet. I never knew what to do. They never told me. So on the way out of the, underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, they decided to have some kind of a war game and Captain Johnson was commander of this vessel at the time. He was a little fellow and he cursed, boy, could he curse. And he did it quite often, especially if he got mad. And so I

was sort of afraid of him, and so finally they sounded general quarters and I headed up to the bridge and got up there and there stood this guy with this big helmet on that had JL on it, and I said I think I'm supposed to take these phones over from you. Oh yeah, he said I've been waiting on you. So he turned around and he took this, these things sit on your chest, sort of clumsy looking by phones today, but it was a sound powered phone. They had no electricity and when you spoke, why it rattled a few modular little carbon bits in there, it had a magnet or something and it would send your voice all over the thing.

Are those the ones that it mounts like you said on the upper part of your chest and the actual microphone kind of comes up -?

Glenn Morgan: Yeah, that's what it was. There was a little button on U3 ships, a bunch of buttons on it to talk -

Yeah, I've seen those.

Glenn Morgan: Big earphones and a great big steel helmet fits clear over your head. So this guy swapped these things with me and there I stood not having any idea, nobody, I had no instructions or anything. And here we were heading out to Pearl Harbor with this little game that they were gonna play. And so as I stood there, all of a sudden not knowing what to do or what was gonna happen next, a brisk voice came over the phone and it said bridge, this is CIC on the line. And I didn't know what to say, and I said well, bridge acknowledges CIC. And then everything got quiet. I said gee, I hope nothing happens anymore. About that time there was all kinds of lookout stations and everything and I acknowledged all of 'em that they were on the line ready and waiting. Then I stood there and all of a sudden CIC came on the line and said bridge, we have a merged plot at 90 mile. I had no idea what a merged plot was. And I just stood there and acknowledged it. Nothing happened for a second or two, a minute, and finally bridge came back and said bridge, this is CIC, we have bogies at 40 miles. And I said bridge acknowledges. And then about that time some lookout aft came on the line and said bridge, we have an unidentified airplane coming in at 0-2-0, 40 degrees elevation, and I said bridge acknowledges. And everything got quiet just a minute, and there were several officers not normally on the bridge that were standing around watching this whole operation, and some lieutenant commander had been watching me and he said sailor, he said are you hearing anything on those earphones? And I said aye, aye, air. Well he said have you been reporting it to the captain? Well I said is that what I'm supposed to do? And he said haven't you ever done this before? And I said no, sir. Well he said look, let me have those things. And he said I'll show you how it works. And a whole new world opened up. All I had to do was report this stuff. And of course once I understood what the system, how the system worked, why it was pretty simple and away I went. So I always had the duty on the phones, and actually I was always stationed on the bridge since that was my general quarters station. I always stood the watches on the bridge, but anytime they had some special event, I went up and took over these ___ telephones. So one day we had a tanker pull up beside us, and they were gonna take on fuel from this tanker, and they fired a little tiny line, small line across, and then they pulled a huge halser across, big thick rope, you know, 6 or 8 inches it looked like in diameter, not that big probably, but at least 4 inches, and then they pulled another one across, and finally they pulled this oil hose across and they started taking the oil, and so the navigator came to me and said Morgan, he says tell the tanker, talker on the tanker that we're going to perform a maneuver and make an emergency turn to port. And that they will probably have to put on a lot more RPM's to make up the turn to keep up with it. So I passed that on to the guy on the other end of the phones, and he told me that they'd give word to execute, and they executed and I told this guy execute, and boy, our ship began to make this

sharp turn, for a big ship it was a sharp turn. The tanker couldn't quite make that turn. And that great big rope broke and the next one broke, the oil line came apart, because that doggone tanker practically went straight ahead. But those were some of my first moments aboard the USS Indianapolis.

Do you remember what your thoughts were the first time you encountered combat aboard the Indianapolis?

Glenn Morgan: Actually I was on those telephones when this happened, and we had gathered a huge flotilla, as far as you could see there were ships, and all of a sudden they had some kind of a, the word got out there was some enemy plane coming, and gee, I stood there on the bridge, and sure enough, here comes a twin engine Betty, and all by itself. And what it was doing flying across all the ships, I have no idea, but as it came across, it came right across our bow and I stood there and looked. I was, of course on the bridge, there is an appurtenance that goes up and it holds a lot of the, oh I think it's the ___, the gunnery type stuff and tells you the range and all this stuff. And I was under this, and of course the so-called wheel, the steering wheel so to speak were sitting there, too, underneath this stuff, but it was easy enough to look up and see this airplane flying across, and it was going at an angle across our bow. And so the first bullets that ever headed my way came from the tail of this Betty, and our gunners got this guy. I mean they set one engine on fire and I watched it climb up forward of us, and it just climbed up and I thought gee, it's gonna get away. But one engine was on fire, and then all of a sudden it just plummeted and hit in the ocean and exploded.

How long after, when did that occur, like how long after you first got on the ship?

Glenn Morgan: Oh, not very long. It was early in the game, and I don't remember the times that this happened. It was after we gathered up this big fleet and was headed someplace and I can't even remember what that was. This happened quite often. We would go to these various islands like Majuro Atoll and then we'd talk and so well we took the, and I believe the first action that I had was at this Enewetok. Well we went back to, they had just, their first big operation, I say big, it was on a very small island of Jurawa, and I didn't make that operation but the ship came back to San Francisco, and that's when I got on it, and we went straight back to Jurawa, so I was able to get off and get on that little island and see what it looked like. Of course they had just taken this thing. All the palm trees were decimated. The Japanese had block houses that were five feet thick they told me, and you could see where armor piercing projectiles, or I guess they were armor piercing, had hit, and just knocked chunks of the concrete out and it didn't destroy 'em or anything. So I could see they had one heck of a fight there. Gas masks were strewn up and down the island and of course they cleaned all the bodies up by that time, but the whole island was a mess, the palm trees were all shredded and gee, the island was just a little old thing and with a good arm, you could throw a rock across it sort of. I'm exaggerating, but it was very small.

Yeah, I'm familiar with that area.

Glenn Morgan: So from there we went on and I can't remember the sequence of events because I didn't try to, I don't try to remember the thing, but we took Enewetok and this was fairly simple. Johnson was the captain all this time. At Enewetok, we had four SOC airplanes, seaplanes of course. Double wing, oh they were, Curtis seagulls they called 'em. We had four of those things and two catapults and we could launch these things off either side, just catapult. Then they'd land 'em in the water behind the ship. When they'd make a turn, it would be a big

slip. They'd plunk these things down and then they'd taxi up beside the ship and snag on a sea slip that was sliding in the water, and then this crane would reach down and pick 'em up and set 'em back aboard. And this was always quite an interesting operation because this was difficult to do this.

Sounds like it in the least, yeah.

Glenn Morgan: But one of these planes, there we were, we'd been shelling Enewetok, and we had 8-inch guns of course on this cruiser, the battleships generally had 16-inch. But one of our airplanes we had launched for observation, and as I was standing on the bridge, one of the fighter planes came down and machine gunning the island, some target I guess he had, and this brass from this thing, from these guns apparently fly out and land in the water. And Captain Johnson could see just up ahead of us little splashes in the water, and he thought we were being fired on from the beach and he was ready to back down, when one of the other officers said oh no captain, said that's just the brass coming from the bullets that the planes are firing, and that satisfied him all right. How I remember these things, I don't know why, but it just happened that that particular day this SOC, one of the officers I remember him telling Captain Johnson, oh look, he said captain, he said our SOC is diving on the island. And here was this SOC diving, heading down and they could see that he was firing. I think they had a 130 caliber machinegun on this thing. And somebody made fun and said well, he said that must mean we've got that island _____. So we didn't have any problems there or anything like that, and of course all of these operations we made under Admiral Spruance. Admiral Spruance was aboard this thing all the time.

Yeah, because you were, your ship was incredibly fast and took part in quite a few engagements, right?

Glenn Morgan: Oh yes. As a matter of fact, we could keep up with these aircraft carriers were pretty fast. Some of these Samora vessels were not that fast. This thing could do 33 knots. The fact is we once set a speed record from when we took the atomic bomb, we set a speed record from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor.

Now do you, I know we interviewed Mr. Cox who is a friend of yours, and he recalled that day that the bomb was brought aboard outside San Francisco. Do you remember that day and what that was like?

Glenn Morgan: Yes, and I don't remember too much about the thing. They brought this thing aboard and they put it in the port hangar, and that's about all I can remember about it. I didn't remember seeing them bring the uranium aboard like they talked about or where they put it. Of course I don't think anybody there really knew where they did, or they claimed they welded it to the deck and all this stuff. Whether they did or not, I don't know, but I walked by that big bomb, probably not every day, but they put a detachment of Marines on it and in some areas there some of them said oh, we used to laugh and sit on that thing. I don't remember them doing that because this thing was about the size of a van. I remember very distinctly this thing, and the wood was a nice, big crate, and all the screws on this thing were countersunk and sealed with some kind of red sealing wax like, and I thought later, why did they do that? I guess they, I didn't realize that they didn't want anybody prying the thing open.

Did you or the members of your crew at that time have any clue that you were carrying something that was going to change the course of the world?

Glenn Morgan: No, but I'll tell you what the rumor was, and I started, I started this one rumor because I was always on the bridge and I would go in the chart house. The chart house had all the charts and everything, where we were, and all the communications really, and that was seen there, and that's where the captain and the navigator remained all the time when we were at sea. And so I'd go in there and look around and look at the maps because I always knew where we were. I liked to look at maps, all that kind of business. So I claimed that I had read a message that came in and knew what that was, and it was the paperwork and maps for the invasion of Japan. And I had that going pretty good. That sounded pretty plausible to most everybody. But some of the guys, Cox probably told you this, they claimed it was scented toilet paper for ____.

Yeah, he did tell us that.

Glenn Morgan: Cox was on the bridge with me quite a bit, and actually when this thing sunk, I give Cox, he used to didn't like me to tell this story, but when the ship sunk, well I don't guess we're to that point yet, but –

Well no, feel free at any point – this is your interview.

Glenn Morgan: Well, this friend of mine, I was sleeping on the deck in Konningtar. Now Konningtar is a place where you could handle the ship just right below the bridge, next deck down. This was an armored place. It had some thick armor, and it had all the capabilities of navigation from there, just the same as on the bridge. And this was my housekeeping area. All I had to do was keep this thing clean, and that's what I did. I didn't have any work parties or I had no KP or anything, never had any KP, but all I had to do was keep this, and this is where my friend, one of the third class quartermasters was sleeping that night, and torpedoes hit. When we got to the bridge, we went to the bridge pretty quick, and Ralph said, let's stick together through this, and I said OK. We still didn't know for sure what happened. So he said you think we ought to get our lifejackets? Now we already had lifejackets on. We had little blow-up, we were using these for pillows. They were already blown up so when the torpedoes hit, we just stood up and snapped it around you. And we crawled up to the bridge on a little vertical ladder which was, well even by this time was beginning to tilt negative.

And this was in the middle of the night when you were hit, right?

Glenn Morgan: Yeah, it was hard to crawl up this thing. So he said you think we ought to go get K-pok lifejacket? We all had K-pok lifejackets hanging on a wire right after the chart house, and this was where we would always be when we had some kind of divisions met, and they'd have inspections and everything and you had a special place, and that was where we had these inspections.

So these were better quality lifejackets?

Glenn Morgan: Well, these K-poks were the kind you wore like a jacket, and they would kind of keep your head up and if you went to sleep or something in the water, you could at least – of course I didn't know all this. I'd never worn one before. I just knew we had it. And when we got back there, well every one was gone, and it was a wire that was stretched across there and these things were hanging on it, and we all knew that our lifejackets were there, so Cox, I think in his story, said that he got the captain a lifejacket, and I told him, I said dadgummit, you gave the captain my lifejacket. He didn't cotton too much to that, but he tells it now regularly. But it

didn't bother me. I just wasn't bothered at all by that lifejacket. I don't think Ralph was either. We went around to the forward part of the bridge, by this time this thing was tilted pretty steep. In fact it was sort of difficult to walk up to the port side. It was sloping over to the starboard. And there were only two guys on the bridge at that time. The bugler of the watch was there, and the officer of the deck was there, Lieutenant Hoher. He was very, very calm. I can remember this like it was yesterday. He was shouting down through the megaphone. It wasn't electric. It was just a funnel. Telling everybody, and you couldn't see, there was smoke down below there, and took all the life rafts off if we'd need 'em. I think they're supposed to come loose, too, if they have to, if you sink. But he was very calm, cool, collected. And I said well, Lieutenant Hoher, is there anything we can do? He said no, he said we've already passed the word to abandon ship. So Cox had already gone. He must've just got going before I got up there.

He went with the captain, right?

Glenn Morgan: I don't know if he went with the captain. I don't remember.

In the interview we had done with Mr. Cox he had said that he followed the captain.

Glenn Morgan: Did he go with the captain?

That's what initially, I believe.

Glenn Morgan: Yeah, well Ralph, Ralph was standing behind me when I said well then, I said, I asked the ___ - the guy that was the bugler in the lot was Donald F. Mack. Now he's still alive. I talk to him occasionally. He doesn't play anymore like I do, but he was a bugler on watch, and I said are you gonna sound that damn thing? He said well, when somebody gives me orders to. Nobody ever gave him orders. I don't guess it was necessary. I don't know what it would have done. Anyway, all the power was out of course. He'd have had to just blow it over the side. And he never did, he said. Lieutenant Hoher, never saw him again. I told Lieutenant Hoher, I said well sir, I'll see you later. I saluted him, and I crawled over that banister, and Ralph Guy never followed me. He was a nice guy, a very good friend. And I told him that we'd stick together, but I never even thought about asking him did he care to go over the - see, the reason I went over this side was to get to the water quick. This sucker was sinking. And by going over the side, I would narrowly would have had to go, drop vertically to the next deck because there was a protrusion that stuck out, and right in the middle of this little circle protrusion was an Alladade, and it was an instrument that stayed in sync with the gyro compass so that you could navigate and keep a certain distance and know where all the other ships were, so your position was being held there by knowing just where you were all the time. Of course this whole fleet then would zig-zag, and by the way, I was a what do you call, I could steer the ship. I was a qualified helmsman. And the reason I did this was when I'd stand up there on watch, I just wouldn't have anything else to do, so one day I watched this old boy zig-zag, and I thought well that'd be kind of fun steering this thing. So I started, so they finally qualified me as a helmsman. And it was pretty simple. They give you an order to execute and kind of left so many degrees, and that's all you had to do. You'd put this big brass wheel, wheel it over to the left, and about 10 degrees from where you wanted to straighten up, you better start straightening up or you go past it. And then so you sort of got the hang of it. Now they never did let me park it. In fact as I recall, they may have looked around to see how many ships was real close when I was there, but it was something to do and I was pretty good at it.

So when the torpedoes struck, it was pretty much the middle of the night and you were asleep in your bunk?

Glenn Morgan: I wasn't in my bunk now, I was on the deck of this konig tower.

OK, so you were on duty then.

Glenn Morgan: No, I wasn't on duty. I just, this is where this fellow and I slept. We'd gotten off the earlier watch that night, and this was where we sacked out because it was cool. It was a lot better than our bunks, and it was a hard deck, but we had what they called mattress covers. You could slide those things like sheets and you just laid those right down on the deck and blew up this little inner tube and you had better than sleeping down in the hot bunk.

Do you remember what you were doing at that time, were you just talking to - ?

Glenn Morgan: No, I was sound asleep when these things hit.

OK, yeah, you were asleep.

Glenn Morgan: It just, boy, lifted you off the deck and we jumped, I looked at my watch immediately. It was 10 minutes after midnight. Let's see, that's what, 0010 – well at any rate, I had purchased a watch. My wife's mother had given me a beautiful Helmos Picko wristwatch. I wrapped it up and put it in a sock and put it in my locker for safekeeping. I didn't want to wear it. You'd get sweaty and everything. So I bought a watch for \$10 off a sailor and he told me, he said now Morgan, when you take this off, be sure you put your finger under the guts of this thing because if you just lift it straight up, the thing's gonna fall out. He said it keeps good time. So I gave him \$10 for this. It did keep good time and when I looked at my watch, it was 10 minutes after midnight. And the reason I mention this is because that watch told me about how long that ship remained afloat because I looked at this watch just almost immediately. We popped up. We had a red flashlight and I looked at this watch, 10 minutes after midnight. The next day, when I looked at my watch, it had probably stopped the minute I hit the water. Or shortly thereafter. And it was 20 minutes after, so 10 minutes had elapsed by the time I did all this stuff.

Yeah, that's very fast.

Glenn Morgan: And when they said the ship sank in 12 minutes, probably that was awful close.

When you first hit the water, did you see any other men in the water? What were you thinking at that point?

Glenn Morgan: You know, that's a strange thing. I was a very good swimmer. If I hadn't have had a lifejacket, it wouldn't have made any difference. Being in the water was, I was swimming all the time, and nobody told me there were sharks that would eat you in the water. I don't remember the Navy ever even telling you that. We went swimming off the side of the ship quite often if we were in a lagoon or something. And I'd swim way out there and showing off, it was just like walking it was so easy. So I swam away from this and I had this little inner tube. Actually when the water hit me in the 40 millimeter mount, I had slid down the side of this, remember this was about a 45-degree angle, off the railing on this thing. I still had my shoes on, and I'd sit on my hind end and just scooted down and I jumped to the next deck which is not that far. I could see because there was kind of an overcast like moon behind an overcast. It was sort

of a, you could sort of just see, and so I jumped between this Alladade that I was talking about and the banister. I knew I didn't want to hurt myself. I looked back up and Ralph had not come, and I hollered at him, and I guess he figured that was a pretty stupid way to go. But from there, I went around this little circular railing over and it was welded into the bulkhead, so I just crawled over that railing and now the bulkhead was remember still in somewhat of a degree that I could slide down it without just jumping or anything, falling. I just slid down into this 40 millimeter gun mount. Well, the water hit me right there because that whole nose was, it was sinking itself. I didn't know the bow was below. I couldn't see. But this little thing kind of buoyed me up. I grabbed the breach of this gun and as that ship went down, I had the feeling of going, I went right up that gun valve. The last thing I touched on the USS Indianapolis was the funnel, flash funnel or whatever they called it, but right on the end of that 40 millimeter gun. It was a quad. There was four of them. So this quad was pretty high off the water, so the whole nose of the ship was under and rolled over. And I had this feeling of going up this gun when actually it was going down, and I just swam away. As I say, I was a very good swimmer. I just swam away. I sat out there and I looked at this thing. I watched it stand up on its nose and the stern stick up, and they propellers were still, screws were still turning. I could see that. And it plunged and in just a mountain of bubbles came frothing up and you could see 'em because they showed a phosphorous light. It was just kind of a glow. And then all was quiet and I heard nobody and I was sitting out there and I thought well, I'll probably have to sit out here until morning. And as I topped this swale, I was looking around. I saw nobody. And as I topped this swale, I could see way back, I saw a dark spot back there, and thought oh what the heck is that? And I say back because to my senses it was where the ship had come from, back in that area, and the dot disappeared and I waited and I kept looking and staring in that direction. Pretty soon there it was again. So I reasoned that this little dot, black spot, was bobbing up at the same time that the wave action, the frequency got the same and I popped up and it popped up. I could see it. So I started swimming towards it. I mean I had real speed going back to this thing, and as I got close to it, I could see it was an airplane and I thought holy cow, our airplane had fallen off the catapult. We always kept, once we got hit by this suicide plane, we went back to the base and got new airplanes and these were nice looking, under wing, Curtis SC-1's, called Seahawks. We had three of those that took off one catapult, but we always had in good weather that airplane sitting on the catapult. And I don't remember how they're tied down. I don't think I ever knew, but they were fastened on there some way. And when this torpedo hit, apparently this airplane had fallen in the water and that's what I saw. So when I got back to it, I could see I thought oh boy, that's keen. I recognize it. It's an airplane. But when I got close to it, I could see it was beginning to cant. I could see that it was tilted and I swam right on up to it, and as I got right almost underneath the wing, the stabilizer, I ran into a life raft. Thank goodness for me. And there was another one sitting there, and these rafts had little hanks of line tied around it for various whatever you want to do with it. But I unfastened one easy and I just tied this next raft and crawled in. I actually pushed this raft when I got there. When the plane was sinking, this stabilizer began to come down at an angle and I thought the darn thing was gonna, at the end of the stabilizer, was gonna hit inside the life raft and maybe pull it under. And so I actually stuck my foot, I remember I swam back with my shoes on, and I stuck my foot out of the water at the edge of this raft and caught that leading edge and pulled that raft back, and then that's when I crawled in. And then I begin to hear some cries for help, and off, way off in the distance. Couldn't see anybody, and all of a sudden a head would pop up here, and pop up there, and by golly, guys would begin to crawl in the life raft. So we had two of 'em and then everything got quiet and somebody said well, if we got sunk by a submarine, maybe they're gonna surface with machine guns or something. And so we didn't light any lights and somebody found some little flashlight. I think those little one cell things you could turn on and it had a big safety pin on it. You could stick 'em in your hat and just sit there with a light on I guess. I guess that was the

idea. But we didn't do that. Somebody said oh, let's not do that. That might draw attention. So we sat there with two life rafts and everything was quiet and all the yells for help disappeared. And somebody said hey, what's that? And we looked over there and there was another dark spot there. We could see movement and we hollered and they hollered back and we found two more life rafts. They were lopped on top of each other, and there was three people. By the time we got all four of these life rafts together, we had 'em tied in a big rectangular configuration, and with 20 people. And I didn't know any of 'em except the Lieutenant Fries. We stood watches together and I knew him quite well. I say quite well, I talked to him quite often. But because he always would stand, an officer of the deck on watch, he was a lieutenant JG. And he was burned severely, so when morning came, I didn't realize, I'd swallowed a bunch of this fuel oil. That fuel oil I think the molecular structure was similar to crude oil. It looked like crude oil anyway. But I didn't know I'd swallowed the stuff. But I wasn't sick until about 9:00, and then the first thing that happened, the wind was blowing and the waves were whitecapping and we all were sitting there. There's not another soul in sight, nothing, no debris, nothing. And we thought well, could we be the only survivors? We had no idea there were hundreds of guys in lifejackets. Didn't see 'em. So we sat there and about that time, there was a canister that came out of one of the rafts and I said golly, who let that thing loose? By this time we found out we had flares and we were pretty well equipped. And off in the wind went this thing like a little sailboat blowing away, and I said boy, I better get that, we may need that. So I kicked off my shoes, and like I say, I only knew Lieutenant Fries. He was in the raft opposite. And this fellow that was sitting next to me was a first class radio. I knew of him, I didn't know him as a personal friend. Never spoke or anything, just knew him, and he was a radio, and he was sitting there and I said I'll go after this container, this canister. And he said well, he said now you may want to think about that. He said look out there. And in between these waves, whitecaps, was this sharp fin going through the water. I never paid any attention to sharks before. And to my knowledge that was the first one I'd seen. So here it was sure enough out there. And so I decided not to do that. I thought that it might not be too smart. And the little canister of course floated away. I never did know what it was. I thought it was pyrotechnic, but we had some flares. The fact is, Lieutenant Fries wanted to shoot these things in the daytime. Now he was, the first day as morning came on, oh I got sick. I swallowed that fuel oil. I didn't remember being that excited, but apparently when I swam back to this plane, I swam through gobs of this stuff and we were all covered with it. Everybody had it all over 'em. You couldn't hardly tell who anybody was, even if you knew 'em. But Lieutenant Fries had abandoned ship he said and he was in his skivvies, and his body was just pink, and he was burned apparently. He said he came out a porthole, and he sat there and wanted to shoot these flares, and I shot a couple of them. I had the flares and a little gadget. It wasn't a very pistol, it was a little, these things were, looked just like shotgun shells only they were 10 gauge. And you put it in this little thing and pull the little plunger back and it looked like a Roman candle, one ball from a Roman candle and it made a little puff of smoke, but in the daytime it wasn't very effective. So I told him I didn't think we ought to shoot the darn things in the daylight, but wait until night so somebody could see it. He agreed. And I told him I was glad that he made it off and everything. I didn't realize, but that night one of the guys in his life raft said I believe Lieutenant Fries is dead. And they said we can't feel a pulse, and then let's see, he was all day that day and then he died that next night about 2 o'clock in the morning. So they wanted somebody to go over there and see if they could feel his pulse and I was already asleep so wait until morning. There wasn't anything you could do. So in the morning he was dead sure enough and they took his ring and his watch. I don't know what they did with it to this day. We said a little prayer and they let him go. A strange thing happened although all those many years, nobody ever mentioned Lieutenant Fries until I had gone to a reunion to a sister ship, The Portland, down in San Antonio, and five of us went in and some fellow came up to me and said you know, we have some friends that wanted to know and they've been asking and

wanted just to ask you guys if anybody ever knew anything about a Lieutenant Fries. And I said well you came to the right place. So at least I gave them closure on this. These things kind of happen. So when these things kind of happened at the time I might tell you about it, but when we got hit by a suicide plane, it killed 9 guys. 6 of these people were quartermaster, and the buglers didn't fare very good on this ship. They killed 2 buglers and my good friend that I went aboard with as a matter of fact. And later when we got sunk, we had gotten 2 new buglers, and of course since I was a big chief in the old, bugler since I was third class, why I made up all the watches. But I really didn't know these 2 new guys. They'd only been on a couple of weeks and I never did really get to know 'em very good. But this happened to one of our quartermasters. When we got hit by the suicide plane, we were locked in in this Turamareta Island, a little bay in there, getting repaired, and we had, they couldn't get the bodies out because they locked these doors to keep the ship from sinking, and this Kukenbach was one of the last guys that got out with another. They killed 6 of our people. The 9 guys they were all in command division, those guys I knew. And three of them, the other guy that was taken out, 2 guys taken out, the last 2 guys, one was Kukenbach, Richard Kukenbach, third class. I think he made second class somebody told me there, but they wanted me to go down and identify his body and I didn't want to do it. And they said no, do it. So they had him down and they had gotten him out of all this and he was oily and everything and they were washing him off and none of the fresh water was available because they had taken out the evaporators when this suicide plane and so they had salt water. So they had laid his body in the shower and rinsed him off with this other guy, and I could see his back was broken and I'll always remember this. And I just never, I didn't want to do it. But the reason I'm telling you this story, we took him over. I was a pall bearer. I didn't have to sound taps that time. The other guy sounded taps and we took this guy over in Higgin's boat to Turamareta Island there and walked down the path with him and turned him over to somebody else. We didn't have to bury him. Came back and then got on the ship. Now after all these years, we had all written a chapter in the book, I don't know if you know about this book, did Cox tell you about this book we had?

I don't know if he did or not, sir.

Glenn Morgan: Well it's called 317 Survived. So I just happened to mention the story I just told you in this book because it was so heavy, and all of a sudden I got a call from a lady in Canada and Edmonton, Canada. I remember because we built a gas processing plant up there in Texaco did, and I always wanted to go up there but I didn't get to go. I got transferred. They were getting ready to move me. But at any rate, she called me and said I'm a Kukenbach. Well, I'd never heard from anybody over all these years. This was after I moved here to Weatherford. It's been only about a year ago I guess, maybe not that long. She came down from Edmonton to see me and we went to Fredericksburg together. She wanted me to give her all the information I could, which really wasn't much for Kukenbach, but I just, he wasn't a bosom buddy or anything, I just knew him quite well because there were only 23 guys in our division and of course I knew them all quite well. But that's just a little story that these things pop up like this.

How was she related?

Glenn Morgan: Oh, I don't remember. She was, don't ask me, I don't remember. She just told me she was a Kukenbach. She flew down here and stayed right here in Weatherford and the next morning we got in her rented automobile, came in Dallas. We talked all the way down and all the way back, and she got all the notes. She was gonna try to do something, write something on it. I don't know what it was.

How would somebody go about getting a copy of that book? Is that for sale to the public?

Glenn Morgan: What she's doing?

No the book that you, 317 Survived.

Glenn Morgan: Yes, if you'll get on the Internet and look up the USS Indianapolis, it's pretty easy. You can look up there and buy one of these. It's \$30 plus tax.

Yeah, definitely do that.

Glenn Morgan: The newer books, you have to get the pictures separate. Somehow or another, the last batch they left the pictures out of it. There's a lot of pictures in there. In fact there's one in there just describing how I came off the ship. It just happened to be a picture they took in dry dock, and it was on the side that I came off and it was very useful to describe how I came off of that thing. I put that in there and a few others. But all those pictures were taken out of the book they said inadvertently, but you can still get 'em. They come as a package when you buy the book. You can get the book from, we have a fellow that took over sending the books out up in Wisconsin, up in, let's see, I guess it's Minneapolis. And that's in what –

Minnesota.

Glenn Morgan: Minnesota.

Yes sir. We'll figure out a way to get a copy of that. I definitely would like to see that.

Glenn Morgan: Well if you look up on the Internet, you can get it. Just type in USS Indianapolis and you get all kinds of junk on there.

Yeah, I definitely want to find that. Now I'd like to go back a little bit in the interview to when there were 20 of you on those four life rafts.

Glenn Morgan: Lieutenant Fries died, and of course that left 19 of us, and one guy was severely burned. His name was Harold Shearer. Another good friend of mine was in this raft with Harold and his arms were completely burned, just skin, just burned flesh just hung from his arms. And he just sat there. He never said hardly anything. And he held those arms up and how he did it I just don't know. He must have been in shock maybe, severe pain. So I don't know, I guess part of that day went by and when this Ken Lanter over in this raft said I wonder if there's something we could do for this guy? He said have we got any – we had first aid kits in this thing. I said yeah, we've got a first aid kit over here. But I said it's all oily. But I said I'll tell you what, I might be able to find some bandages. It was all wet, too. So I looked in this bandage and I kept unrolling this big ball of bandage and I came across, soaking wet but clean, and not only that, we had some mineral oil in this stuff. I don't know what that's for. I guess that's so you can drink if you get constipated or something. I don't know what that was in there for. But old Ken, I gave him this bandage and we pulled the rafts up together and he started this bandage and laid this flesh over this guy's arms around, and then I had this bottle of oil and I just poured it right down as he went, on top of this, and we wrapped both arms up and the guy didn't say much if he said anything. And I don't know if he felt better after that, but I know Ken and I did. We felt like we tried to do something. And this guy sat there. Now to tell you everything that happened out there takes a while, but while we were sitting there in the life rafts, of course

sharks were all around us. I never believed I never saw that many fish. Later I found out that if you parachuted out there in the South Pacific and landed there where we were, there wouldn't be all those sharks. This guy from the Florida State University or whatever it was down there told us that what happens is this, is when the fish are out, they're all scattered in the ocean all around. But when these torpedoes hit or anything unusual happens, they flock to this point and they can hear this a long ways off. So he said what happened was those fish that were with you were fish that gathered there when that explosion hit and they followed you out there. They were not ordinarily there. There were all kinds of fish and all kinds of sharks and a lot of 'em, a lot of sharks and one great big one. We called him Charlie. I didn't name him. Somebody dubbed him Charlie and he was a big shark. So we never paid too much attention to him and he didn't try to do anything until one day while we were sitting there, you had to sit down in the water. I don't know if you know what a Navy life raft looks like. It's nothing but a rectangular piece of wood with an open inside with a lattice work that you sit on. You sit on it and you're sitting in water up to your navel. But if you sit up on the side to get out of the water, too many guys can't do it at once because that makes it sink. So you just sit in the water and sort of bounce around. So one day it was sort of my turn and I had the corner of this life raft. I was sitting there and we had spam. We had spam cakes aboard this thing and we could make, I think we could get nine pieces of spam off of one can. And we had some hard tack, little round looking things that didn't taste very good, but by the time you put a piece of this spam in between 'em, it made a pretty good little sandwich considering you didn't have anything else. So we rationed all this stuff. J.J. Moran, this guy that was a first class radioman, he took over. I tell you this guy should've got some kind of a medal I thought. But we had fresh water in wooden kegs and these guys were drinking this at random the first day. J.J. asked me, he said have you had any water? I said no. I said I just haven't been. They're drinking the stuff. We need this. So he just called it to everybody's attention because he was the senior rated guy. I think we had a second class. Of course I was a third class. And so he set up this thing. He said there will be no drinking water. We had little cups, little enamel gray cups with ounce marks on it, and this gear, this fastened to this thing, and we would pull out these little cups and pour in fresh water. The water had probably been in there for months, but it didn't make any difference in the taste and it was wet, and we'd get three ounces in the morning and three ounces in the afternoon. Everybody got a little share. And we'd have a sandwich. So we were in real good shape considering what the other guys were there. So Charlie one day, and we'd throw one of these spam cans in, it had this oil and stuff and we'd just pitch 'em out there. And Charlie would always kind of come in and get nosy and get in a little closer. And one day right after we threw the spam can, he came in and he came right towards my raft and my corner, and I pushed this guy next to me over. I said get on over there, here comes Charlie. And he'd never gotten this close before. And as I slid over, this shark came up, and he was a big shark, and he came up out of the water and he slid his head right up on the corner of that raft. He never tried to bite or anything. I just looked at him in amazement and he just slid back in and swam off. And that was my experience with sharks.

So you're saying the shark pulled his head out of the water.

Glenn Morgan: His head came clear up on the side of this raft. He didn't try to bite or anything. I guess he just took a look around and slid back in. But he was a good sized shark.

How big do you think he was?

Glenn Morgan: Oh, I don't know. I look back on this thing and of course to me, now it seems like he was awful big, but perhaps he was, he may have been 8 foot long, I don't know. But his head was a big wide thing and I tried to give the picture of this to this guy, he's an authority on

these sharks, and trying to gather this kind of information up for Florida University. He said, well he was probably, I said he looked sort of a, instead of being gray, the way I remember it he was sort of a green, slightly olive kind of color almost. That's the way I remember. But otherwise he looked like one of those pictures of those big white sharks. I really don't know. But there were plenty of sharks and you could look in between the rafts and look straight down and you could see sharks, all sizes of sharks. None of them didn't look as big as Charlie. I didn't know if there were any huge ones down there that was real deep. It was difficult to tell. But there was all kinds of other kind of fish, too. In fact one day I opened this kit up. They bind these all up in little canister like things and with cloth around them, painted heavily, and it's kind of hard to take the things off. But they're in a can and I pulled this fishing kit out. Now the Navy gave you a fishing kit that was, I can describe like this. It was a piece of white cloth. It had hooks sticking in it. It had string already in the hooks. It had yarn, colored yarn, and dried up bacon rind. I thought well, I'll just fish. I was back into this raft in that corner back there, so I took a hook and I couldn't get the hook through the bacon rind, so Ken Lander next raft said here, take this pocket knife. So I laid this thing down on the edge of the raft and stuck this knife on this bacon and punctured a hole in it so I could get it on the hook. Well, I tried the yarn first and these fish would come up and kind of, they didn't even want to, they didn't have anything to do with that. I would twitch it like kind of make it look like something. And of course the water is just crystal clear and I put this bacon rind on and boy I drug it behind there and I tried it, and they'd come up and look at it and then didn't want to bite it. So I quit fishing and I laid this canister down and the guy in the next raft, another guy who was over there with Ken, was there and he was sort of laying lengthwise in this thing with his head in his hand and his arms up, his leg in the water, but his elbow was up on the side of the raft kind of holding his head, and he found this little dip net in this fishing kit. The dip net was a little wire thing. You could pull it apart and make it look like a kind of little dip net like you find for goldfish people that have fish. It wasn't very big. And we had malt tablets, and we didn't ration these malt tablets. Nobody liked 'em and we figured it'd just make you thirsty. So this kit, I looked over there and this guy, I never knew his name to this day, I got all the names of everybody that was there with us, of course later, but never knew which one he was. But anyway he laid there and he would chew up these malt tablets. Now in between the rafts there was about three foot span there where we tied 'em that way. And sometimes they would come together and hit, but most of the time they would stay away and he was fishing in between. He would spit this malt tablet out into the water and there was a little purplish looking fish about the size of your hand would swim up to that and drift around, and all of a sudden he would grab that and go. He liked that stuff. And this guy was poised with this dip, and when that little fish would get up close to that thing and make a grab at it, he would make a grab at the fish and he just kept missing that fish, and that fish would keep coming back. So I looked over there at him and I said, boy, I said you're never gonna catch that fish. He said well, he said maybe not, but he said what else have I got to do? And that made pretty good sense to me and he kept at it, and by golly, he did catch that thing. And so Ken had his pocketknife, so he said look, here, let me have that fish. He cut him up into little pieces. And we caught, this guy caught four of the most beautiful little, not too little, it was pretty good sized, silver, or silverfish-blue fish, and old Ken cut those up and laid those things, all four of these things. Ken took his knife, cleaned 'em and filleted those things and laid that white, just pure white meat right up on the side of that life raft and he said OK boys, he said here, we got a meal here. So I reached across and got a nice little piece of square fish and chewed it up, and the fishing kit instructions that came with it said most fish out there in the ocean are edible, and not poisonous. But be careful of them around land because, and don't take any if you're not certain, don't take any big bites. Just take small bites and try it out first. If you get sick, don't eat it of course. But that was a general rule. So it said if you could catch enough fish, you could survive indefinitely. And they suggested if you caught enough and you had rag, to just dice 'em up and

put 'em in the rag and wring that rag up with that fish in there and take the juice into a can or something, and this could sustain you for some time. And it would quench your thirst, too. So that was the instructions I can remember. I wrote later when we wrote a little article, they all asked us to write something, and I suggested they put a better fishing kit. Do something better than what they had because not everybody is gonna chew up a malt tablet and spit it in the water. But that's how we caught those fish, and some of the guys ate it and some of 'em didn't, but we knew we sort of satisfied something there that we felt more self assured that we could catch fish if we wanted to. That's not the only thing. I didn't tell you this but the first night, there was a guy that paddled up on a floater net, and a floater net, they keep 'em rolled up like a cigar, a log, and of course this floater net when you unroll it, it lays out around 10 or 12 foot square and it's just a rope net, but it's full of little floatation devices which are little round wheels, square-like, black, that float, and then you can crawl up in this floater net and lay there until help comes I guess. So this guy came out on this floater net paddling up to the raft that first night, and as he came up, he came right to the corner I was sitting in, and I tied him off and I said do you want to come aboard? And he said no, I'll stay here. So the rest of the night he stayed on top of that. He paddled it just like you would straddle a log. So the floater net has a story in this. The next morning he did come aboard and we had everybody by this time in the rafts sort of proper amounts in each raft and that floater net just set there. So when I would set up on the side of the raft, the wave action and everything would bring it up and we'd bump the raft and hit me in the hiney. And so I did that for about two days. The third day, I asked everybody if they would like to have this thing tied onto their raft, and they said no, we don't need it. Just cut it loose. And I hated to do it and I sat there looking at this thing. Now we all sat down in this water and at night it was cold. It wasn't warm water, it was cold. And you'd huddle up to everybody and then the first thing you knew, you'd keep scooting up to the next guy to you and the first thing you know you're all in one end of the raft and the guy that was at the very end, the water was getting deeper on him. So we found some 3x6 or 4x8 I think what they were canvases in these kits, these wrapped in one of these things. So I looked at this floater net and old J.J. Moran, I told him, I said you know, I said I believe that we could take that floater net and unroll it, lay it out in the water, and let's all get up out of the way and I can get up off the edge of this thing and pull that floater net in and we'll lace it back and forth inside the raft, and it should fill up this thing and then we take this canvas and we lay across these little black wheels to kind of take the sharp, they weren't square, they were round but they were flat. Round, and had an edge on it. So I said we can just lay that and then if the water comes up in between, I said the canvas will keep it from hitting us. And he said well that sounds like a pretty good idea. He said let's try that. So we had this one guy, said Morgan, that sounds pretty stupid to me. Well, I said how do you know if we don't try? People didn't like to get up and move. You were stiff and we were young kids, sort of, you didn't feel good just getting up and moving around, so I guess that's – he just didn't want to do it, but finally J.J. told him, he said now get your can up there and help us pull this in and we did. I should've got a metal. That's pretty smart because I tell you what, that was the first time I had a good night's sleep was after we pulled that in because we were high and dry. This came into play again when the last morning that we were out, we knew we were gonna be picked up, that fourth evening Ken Landers sat there and everybody was in kind of a state of lethargy, and it was in the evening, and he perked up and said hey Morgan, look south down there. And we knew where south was. The sun was setting. And there was a little black dot. He says is that a bird or a plane? Oh it was way down, you could see it up on the horizon. And I said gosh, I don't know, it looks kind of like a bird. About that time a little flash of light came off of it like the sun, it caught a glimmer of it. And I said gee, I believe that's an airplane. Well by this time, the other guys were all perking up. We believed then that they were looking for us and that night, we began to see these search lights showing up in the sky way off and we knew then that something was happening. And so on the fifth morning, the sun came up, why we all had little

mirrors in each raft. I had mine tied to my corner, hanging down on a string. It was a little signal mirror and it was a unique little thing. It's nothing but a mirror with a round mirror behind it with a little X cross in the center, plain glass that you could see through. And you could take this, I practiced, it works. And if you've got a mirror and you just flash a mirror around, you never know where that flash is going. So if you aim it up in the sky you can't see where it's hitting because there's nothing there to hit. But in the life raft where you could practice with somebody at the other end, you could take and when you would hold this up, you could look through this cross and this little round mirror on the back that you're looking into by lining the light up, it would come through this cross and this cross would, you could see it in this little mirror on your hand, and by just a little manipulation, you could put this cross and when you saw the cross on your hand in the mirror lined up to the cross, clear cross, and you could look through it at the same time and see your object, then you pretty well had this flash going in that direction. And I would practice on these guys at the end of these other rafts and hit 'em in the chest or back or something just to see if I could do it. So on the fifth morning, we ran into a rain storm, a pretty good one. So we took our canvas full of water, but we couldn't drink it, it was so brackish. And so we folded the canvas up and put it up and washed it out with that brackish water was the idea. But there was another rainstorm we could see, we actually ran into it and caught a little water and it was drinkable, barely, but we knew that we could catch water. It wasn't something we really had to do at that time, but during that rain squall, the blue lights that we had seen were south of us that night, we thought. So two guys in this raft that Ken was in decided to put their canvas in between two paddles and they were gonna sail. They thought maybe we'd get closer by sailing down there. Of course I thought it was pretty ridiculous. But when they did this, Harold Shearer who was a burn guy who had been quiet all this time, jumped out of the raft and said you're not gonna put me in that raft. Ken grabbed him and they all pulled him back in, and he sat there in that raft just shaking. So J.J. Moran said look, we got to get him over out of that water in this raft where he can be dry because he's gonna catch pneumonia. He's just sitting there shaking. So he told the guy that didn't want to pull the floater net in to get over there in that raft. Well of course now that he was high and dry he bitched about it because he didn't want to get over there. J. just said you get over there and he said well, why don't you or Morgan get over there? Well, J.J. said we'll spell you off. Don't worry. But we got to get him out of there. So we transferred him from that wet raft over to our dry raft, and on the way, old Ken Lander found a couple of morphine syringes and he shot this guy in the can with 'em. He said two of 'em. I don't remember, I guess it was two. I was talking to him the other day. That's how I come up saying two. I just thought he had one. But at any rate, this Harold Shearer came on into our raft and laid right down and went to sleep. And the sun came out from this rainstorm and somebody said look, and down on the horizon there was a plane, and now we could see what was happening. It wasn't just going back and forth, it was making big circles, and at that angle it just looked like to us it was going back and forth. And sure enough, we pulled our mirrors out of the water and man, I hit that guy. I don't know if I hit him or not. And the other guys did the same thing. They had some mirrors, too. And that plane straightened up and flew right straight over us. It was a PB Ventura. It couldn't land on the water of course. And they threw a big marker out. It turned out to be a marker, a big green thing and it spread out in the water, and 15-20 feet in diameter. And they flew on and then somebody said look, here comes another plane, and a Catalina came over. Guys were standing in the blisters on these and they waved and I said oh boy, it's gonna land and pick us up. But it couldn't do it of course. And the only plane that landed of course was Adrian Mark's Catalina and then it couldn't get off the water again. He saved a lot of fellows. I'm sure you probably heard that story. But we had no idea there were any other survivors until those blue lights shined and then we realized they must be finding somebody.

Sir, during the entire time that you guys were out there in those rafts, did anybody ever lose hope or did you have to do things to keep morale up?

Glenn Morgan: Oh, I think they did. I didn't really. I tell you the honest truth, I knew that we were capable of doing this fish bit and we were sitting there in a state of lethargy one day and it was in the afternoon, and one of the guys in the raft up, well I call it the raft ahead of us, just seemed like they were always the leading raft, but somebody up there right out of the, everybody was meditating or something, and he said you know what fellows? He said why don't we just, why don't we break out the paddles and paddle someplace? He said why would we just want to sit out here and die doing nothing? And I said well, which way would you want to paddle? Well he said I wonder where the nearest land is? And I said oh, I said about a mile and a half I think. And he said oh yeah? Which way? And of course when he looked at me, I was pointing straight down. And he didn't think that was funny, and I know he said something to me, probably a curse word, go to hell or something like that. I never did know, never did know who the guy was later either. But all these years later they tried to find it. In fact, Cox went out on this rig that tried to find them and they found out that it was not in a mile and a half of water, but more like four miles of water. So I owed this guy an apology. I was wrong on that mile and a half. I thought that was funny and I wrote it in to Humor in Uniform, Reader's Digest, but they didn't think it was funny, but I thought it was kind of humorous.

Sir, if you would, describe for us what it was like when they finally rescued you.

Glenn Morgan: That morning that we spotted the airplanes that flew over us and went through the rain squalls, about 1 o'clock we were sitting out there then. We were pretty sure we were gonna be rescued, and somebody happened to scour the horizon and there was a radar ship. You could just barely see it coming over the horizon. And of course we waited and this ship pulled right up beside us and back down. I mean he did a good job. He put us right beside that thing. And they had cargo nets they call 'em, hanging over the side of this. This happened to be the Ringness APD 100, Ringness. It happened to be the ship that the captain was picked up by. And so we climbed aboard. Some of the guys couldn't do it, they had to have some help. But we climbed aboard feeling pretty good about the whole thing, and they took us, we had fuel oil all over us and a lot of it had kind of rubbed off. But I didn't tell you but I got so sick, I vomited all day the first day, and by the end of the day, nothing would come up and I'd get sick, and finally some green stuff came right out in front of me, and of course you're sitting there in water and there it was, green. But you know, right after that I begin to feel good. It felt like, I felt so good, I actually felt real good. It just made me feel so much different. So I crawled up this thing in pretty good shape. Of course it was kind of peculiar after sitting in that life raft and then trying to stand up on this deck of this thing. They took us in and they took this fuel oil I had been sprawling in and it was still on me, they took us all and put us in a shower. And they had already picked up the captain and some of the other fellows. And one of my good friends, a guy by the name of Hallard, was already picked up and he was with the captain, matter of fact. And he hollered at me as I stepped through this hatch, and this little ship had bunks all the way up and down each side of the ship. And that's where they put us all and they took us in a shower and took a brush and soaked us down and scrubbed us down good and put us in a bunk. Said what do you want to eat? And I said I'll take two eggs over easy, and you know what? I got 'em. They had fresh eggs on that ship. All we ever had was powdered eggs. But then the captain said, I got word somebody came and said the captain wants to see you. Well of course the captain and I weren't bosom buddies, but I knew him quite well because I stood watches and I reported to him and talked to him all the time when I reported all these different things that I found out I was supposed to do. And he said well I'm certainly glad to see you. He said would you do me a

favor? And I said sure. So he asked me to get all the names of the guys aboard the ship with rank and everything, and I did. I got the names and took 'em back to him, and that was the last time I saw him until he had a court marshal of course. He was court marshaled later. I got a subpoena to attend this for a witness. But I got it two weeks late. I had been moving around so much. And so I didn't get to go to his court marshal. I wished I had. I thought I could've added something to it. But I know they passed the word to abandon ship because they told me so right up there on the bridge. And the captain must've just left just before I got up there. But what was the question? I've already forgotten.

I was just asking what it was like when you were actually finally rescued, actually finally got out of the water.

Glenn Morgan: We stayed aboard this thing, and of course the burn guy, Harold Shearer, they put on the other side all by himself, this other side, port side of this side. I went over to see him. He couldn't remember much, and to this day, well he died a couple of years ago. He'd been very ill the last three years and his wife, he never knew what happened to him. He never seemed to want to know. I forced him to listen one time. I told him the story I told you about him, his hands and arms and everything. And when I went over to see him across the other side of the ship, oh, he said I remember you, he said you were my friend. And I didn't know what he meant by this. Maybe he did remember something about what we did. But I never saw him again and I really was surprised that he even made it. But all those years he never came to any of our reunions, but I would always call and when I was the chairman, I would always try to get these guys to come. But I was chairman of the organization from '85 to '90 and then I didn't like it so I gave it up. All it did was it kept you busy and cost you money.

I'm really glad you guys -

Glenn Morgan: Well that's what happened and the Ringness picked us up and then they took us to the base hospital, took us to a hospital on Cull___ in the Palau Group, which we had, that was the only islands we had taken without Admiral Spruance. We were under Halsey at that time. And Captain Johnson was still, I might tell you a story about that. While we were lying to ___ we'd lay out there in the water and say hey, we need some bullets over here in such and such sector, and that's what we'd do. And we had gunners that were very, very good. Then one day we were just lying to when a 37 millimeter projectile hit the water, glancing leap and hit the ship up in Battle 2, and there was a guy, a boats- I mean Cox, third class boatswain mate I guess, same thing, picked this bullet up and they came down to the quarterdeck from the Battle 2 down this ladder, and Captain Johnson was still the captain. I told you he cursed. And boy could he curse. Well, he knew Hodgson. Hodgson was kind of, oh, he was one of a kind. He had this projectile in his hand and as he hit the quarterdeck, he was almost skipping with it, holding it up by his head, up in his hand. And Captain Johnson realized what had happened. I was standing on the afternoon bridge minding my own business when Johnson ran there, and he knew Hodgson and he hollered down and he said Hodgson, god-damn you, he says throw that son of a bitch overboard before you blow your stupid head off. Hodgson never missed a beat and threw that bullet in the water. Now I didn't know Hodgson real good. But lo, these many years later, I'm just throwing this in, some of these happen it's amazing, so I worked for Texaco. I went back to work for 'em. They sent me down to Texas from Illinois to build a processing plant down at Blessing, Texas, which is not too far from the water down there. And while we were building the plant, I was to go and be the inspector and then I was to start it up and running. So while I was standing down, we had just set three great big, 90,000 gallon propane tanks in the saddles down there, and I was watching the ___ come up, just seeing how they did it and

everything, when a big bus pulled up, or a white van pulled up in front of the office out there. Now that's quite a ways from down there, but when this guy stepped out, I recognized this Hodgson immediately. All the way from Houston, he was a metal worker by this time. I couldn't believe it. I hadn't seen him in all those years. I walked up to him and I said Hodgson, he was a tall guy and I was looking up to him and I had a Texaco hard hat on, and I said Hodgson, and he said yeah, yeah, he said who are you? And I said well I was a bugler aboard your ship. Well, god-damn, he said what are you doing here? I said well, I run this place. Well he said you can hire me. He said I need a good job. Well, I said I'm looking for some good people. And he said you got a union here? And I said no, no union. He said well you would have if I got in. Well I said you won't be coming, I can tell you that. We became friends and I went into Houston occasionally to see him. And finally was transferred into Houston. So my last 7 years for Texaco was spent there in the office there. But those kind of little stories crop up. What else do you need to know?

Well one other question sir, I know when we talked to Mr. Cox, he was I guess in the hospital after he was rescued, but he said it wasn't until at that time that he got word that the atomic bomb had been dropped and then that was the cargo that you guys had carried. Was that about the same for you when you found out?

Glenn Morgan: Yes. We knew, I tell you what, I was on Guam. I don't know where he was. Some of the guys went to Samora in the Philippines, but we were taken to the hospital there in Palau, but I was only there a couple of days and all those that were capable that was put aboard I think it was the hospital ship Tranquility, and taken to Guam. That was kind of a nervy thing because this thing is lit up like a Christmas tree traveling through those waters. Anyway, they took us and put us in the base hospital on Guam, and it was shortly after that that this all came on the news and we almost knew without anybody telling us that we were a part of that thing. We knew this was important. They just didn't do this kind of stuff. They told us and we hadn't even had a good shake down cruise when they did this, and we just got through being overhauled by getting hit by that suicide plane, and so we knew it was something important.

I was also gonna ask you sir, we've mentioned briefly Captain McVeigh earlier and how you got the summons for the court marshal and weren't able to attend, but what is your opinion and your take on the Navy's court marshaling of Captain McVeigh?

Glenn Morgan: Well it was to me, and I think all of us survivors, every man, that it was a kangaroo court and if you look back on this thing, I have no idea why they would do this to this man. He didn't have to zig-zag and that's what they had finally gotten him on, not zig-zagging for crying out loud. Even the Hashimoto that they brought over for his court marshal said look, it wouldn't have made any difference whether he was zig-zagging or not, even some of our old commanders, submarine commanders made that same statement. But they wanted to hang this guy some way, some form, some manner, and that's how they did it. Because stop and think about this, here is the USS Cole that got the side blown out of it over there in Yemen or whatever. What did they do to that captain? Did they court marshal him?

No.

Glenn Morgan: Do you think that Captain McVeigh would have, in a situation like that in a country like that, would allow any unidentified vessel approach his thing? I don't think so. Yet I think he got his wrist slapped. He never got court marshaled. Captain McVeigh was, he was made a scapegoat. I don't think there's any doubt. Now certainly the people on the other side

that lost loved ones on this thing, would almost grasp at straws in trying to feel like he was responsible for the loved ones they lost, but I don't think there's one survivor that would believe that he should have been court marshaled.

Were you present for the reunion when he came and spoke?

Glenn Morgan: Oh yes, that was the first one.

Can you describe kind of what that was like, emotions in the room when he spoke to you guys?

Glenn Morgan: Well, I can remember some of the things that happened. In fact, you've got to understand that this Hodgson was not a survivor, but we made him sort of an honorary guy over the years. I didn't, but McCoy, the Marine that started this organization, he was responsible for a lot of however this thing went. We went out to the airport to pick the captain up and had this parade back through town. They were all delighted to see him and he looked good and everything, and he told this story. I'm leaving Hodgson out of this because I'll tell you if you want to hear it, I'll tell you what he said. It's sort of raunchy. We always had, we had a nice big meeting with the captain and everybody stood up and asked questions and everything, but the captain told this story. He said you need to know, now remember I watched these two guys ____ Admiral Spruance and Captain McVeigh, every day almost _____. Every general quarter I was on that thing standing there delivering messages to the captain, and I watched these two people. They were stalwart, regal. You could just see it. The rapport between these two guys was good, too. And Admiral Nimitz was a nice guy. And before I go on, let me tell you what happened to the Admiral and then Jerome Hallard. Hallard was I told you my good friend. He was a third class quartermaster. Well while we were in port one day, the Admiral was aboard, and he has a cabin on the focasil. And there's a little platform that sits out beside the ship that they heave a ____ line to see how deep the water is just in case their electronic stuff doesn't work I guess. But that was, they always did this way back I guess and they kept doing it. Had this little platform and old Luke, we called him Luke Jerome Hallard, Benson Jerome Hallard was his name. And he was fishing with a rod and reel. We were in port anchored, some lagoon out there in the South Pacific, and I happened to be up on the bridge just looking down to see if he was gonna catch anything, when Admiral Spruance stepped out of his cabin and began walking. And Luke, I watched him start wrapping in his line and the Admiral walked over to him and said something to him, and Luke shook his head and dropped his rod back into the waters, let his bait back down. And Spruance took a walk all the time. He walked when he could. He walked all the way up to the very end, and when he got up to the very end there was a lieutenant commander up on the bridge with me. I don't remember who he was. But he hollered down to Luke and he said Hallard, get the hell out of there. So Hallard started cranking in and Spruance overhead this all the way up to the focasil. And he hollered all the way back and he said I told this man he could fish there. It's all right. Oh, aye, aye sir. So Luke let his line back in. So later I said what did he say to you? He said well he called him son, he said son, he said you can go ahead and fish. You're not bothering me one bit. Just a little story that probably not very many people know.

Oh, that's great.

Glenn Morgan: But that shows you that the Admiral and the Captain were, they were sort of one of a kind I thought. And you could see it. So I think I wrote this in my story in the book, but it was very evident. But I thought they were both high class people.

And I guess one last question I wanted to ask was when did your wife and your family find out that you'd been rescued? I assume from what Mr. Cox had told us in his interview that families didn't really even know what had happened to you while this was going on, right?

Glenn Morgan: No, they got a telegram, and of course my dad knew what ship I was on. So the morning that they got the word, it came out on the radio, he was already on his way to work, and he could turn out a driveshaft on one of these high speed boats in that lathe he was running in nothing flat because I watched him do it. And he was making these things for the war, still making these things and he was on his way to work to this machine shop there in Oklahoma, and he lived out on a little farm outside of this town a ways, and on the way in he heard this on the news. He turned around and went back and told my mother. He said well, it looks like we've lost our son, because to him 100% casualties meant everybody on the ship was lost. And he said it looks like we've lost our son. And the ship was sunk. And she said no, I don't believe that. She said he was just too good a swimmer. And she was right. Because I tell you what, when I saw that airplane, my swimming came into good stead. When you're a real good swimmer, and believe me, I was a good one, I could dive and all this kind of stuff. I'd dive off the side of that ship. But this is why when I went into the water, I'm sure I was excited of course, but I wasn't panic stricken like you'd ordinarily be because falling off of a motor and diving in the water, swimming out and everything it was just nothing. And so she said yeah, he's just too good a swimmer and I believe she was probably right.

How long was it before they got word that you were OK?

Glenn Morgan: I don't remember. They got a telegram. My wife got a telegram, too. I still have the telegram. In fact I think it's in the museum there __ Indianapolis. But it said that I'd been wounded but I was in great shape and all that stuff. So I don't know what the telegram they gave my wife, I never did see it. She probably pitched it in the trash by now. Don't know. But I happened to keep this one to my folks. But that's sort of how that went. Of course I got a survivor leave. The fact is, I was headed back. You got a 33 survivor day leave, but when I went back to Norman, Oklahoma, they said that you know what? Said you got enough points to get out of this baby if you want out. I said what do I have to sign? And so I got out. I was only in there almost three years. But the USS Indianapolis was my home for about two of these years.

Well sir, I tell you, we really appreciate you sharing your memories with us. It's really an honor to be able to interview you and I know Mr. Patterson and everybody here at the General Land Office greatly appreciates you taking the time to talk to us. And what we'll do sir is we'll make copies. We'll get a transcript made of this interview and we'll also make copies for you on disk. If you need more copies to give to your children or grandchildren or friends, those are all free. We'll make copies for you. And then ultimately we'd like to get any copies of pictures you have, especially of you in uniform or from that time period and we can put all those on our web site along with the interview.

Glenn Morgan: Well, yes, I guess I've got a few of those. I don't have too many pictures of me. Well I got some yeah, I guess so. Well, I tell you what, if you get one of those books -

Oh yeah, we'll do that, too.

Glenn Morgan: Where my chapter starts, now remember, my chapter is one of the best! But you know it's funny how this came about. In fact I was in Denver when our secretary thought this up, and I was getting ready to come back and I had to make it back to Midland I thought.

My son was still working for Texaco there and I said I need to get back and get in there. And she said wait a minute, I've been thinking about this all night. Tell me why this wouldn't work, and she sprung this on me why we didn't write 'em up, each one of us. And by golly she was the inspiration and the fire power behind this, and she did the whole thing, put the whole thing together and of course there are some, well, she was gonna have everything proofread she said, but she didn't get it done so just made the whole thing up, so there's some little rinky dink type errors. Ken Lander is the only one that's still alive and he's not doing real good, in Georgia, that remembers the same thing. Matter of fact, the first time, I never saw him for 20 years, and he walked in the Atkinson Hotel up in Indianapolis and I grabbed him as he went by, and I said for crying out loud, where in the world have you been all these years? So I saved the last red flare that we had, and he went back. I also had this shooting mechanism, and when we got aboard the Ringness, we all stepped out of this, wet clothes and everything. I latched onto that flare, but I didn't get this right. He said let me show you something. He left his room and he pulled this thing out. He had to shoot, shot this thing. Kind of interesting isn't it?

Oh that is neat.

Glenn Morgan: But I could always verify. My wife says how, I said you know, a lot of these guys don't remember what happened out there. She said how come you think you remember? I said you better believe it. Just like it was yesterday. So I said I've got a guy that can verify everything I've said, including these fish, because he cleaned 'em. Well, so much for that.

What I'd like to do sir is right before we wrap up because we'll end this interview and then you and Mr. Sanders can talk and follow up. But I guess is there anything that you would want to leave kind of a final thought or closing thought for this interview? Remember future generations and historians are going to listen to this for posterity.

Glenn Morgan: Oh, I tell you, I talk at several schools, anytime anybody asks. I just got back from a school in Dallas and this lady called me and said gee, would you come over and talk to the high school kids? Private school right in the middle of Dallas. I said well, in fact they even came over and got me and took me over there. It was delightful talking to these children. A lot of these people don't even know there was a World War II. It just sort of affects you a little bit. I've had a couple of occasions where the teacher hardly knew there was a World War II and what happened. If they did, they didn't know much about it. But strangely enough, some of the teachers are just doing wonders on this. In fact my daughter-in-law, I'm getting ready, I still sound my horn. I still play on it. I still sound taps anytime somebody wants it. So she puts on a program in Midland and last time she had over – and this has been going seven, eight years now. She started the first one in her gym. They got 51 veterans to come. And the children up to the 6th Grade put on a USO type show, put the songs back in that day and everything that we all knew. Now she does it in the Confederate Air Force out there at Midland Air Base. And we had over 500 veterans last year.

Wow, that's amazing.

Glenn Morgan: So on Veterans Day I'll go out there or the day before I'll go out there and sound taps for her and then I'll high tail it back to Bryan College Station and sound taps because they're having a veterans business there in Memorial Park.

That's good to hear.

Glenn Morgan: So I stay sort of busy. But anyway is that about all?

Oh yes sir, and again, it's been a real honor for us to interview you.

Glenn Morgan: Oh bless your heart, thank you.

Yes sir and what I'll do now, I'll go ahead and turn the recorder off and let you and Mr. Sanders go ahead and talk, so I'll do that now.

[End of recording]